

GE-Housatonic River Citizen's Coordinating Council
Connecticut Sub-Committee
New Milford Senior Center

New Milford, CT
March 25, 2002

Meeting Summaries

Prepared by the Massachusetts Office of Dispute Resolution

Lead Facilitator: Harry Manasewich
Assistant Facilitator: Kirk Fallis

Participants: There were 23 people attending this meeting.

Welcome, Introduction and Review of Agenda

The facilitator welcomed everyone to the meeting of the GE-Housatonic River CCC Connecticut Subcommittee in New Milford.

Agenda Changes: There were no additions to the Agenda.

Review of Previous Meeting Notes: There were no corrections to the notes.

Presentation

Summary of Sediment Sampling (Susan Svirsky, EPA, & Dick McGrath, Rich Denino of Roy F. Weston)

The consultant team for EPA, Roy Weston presented a summary of sediment sampling for the Housatonic River in Connecticut. The presentation covered the following areas:

- * Summarized samples collected and results
- * Compared new data with by data according to Reach
- * Looked at temporal trends in the data according to

Reach

In total 40 samples were collected between October and November of 2001. The team attempted to sample whenever possible at two depths: 0 to 6 inches and 6 to 12 inches. At dams, samples were taken at the top and bottom 6 inches of core. However, EPA was not successful in every case as some locations there was very limited amount of sediment. Out of the 40 samples taken, PCBs were detected in 6 samples at 3 locations. The highest concentration level being 1.2 ppm and the average across the 6 samples was 0.26 ppm. Average concentrations were slightly higher in deeper samples (6 to 12 inch depth). There is no further sediment sampling proposed at this time by EPA. The biota sampling by GE will continue. EPA will evaluate new data when it becomes available.

Discussion:

There was clarification on the term 'reach' and why it is used. EPA explained the Housatonic River has been divided into areas. These areas have been selected in most cases based on characteristics of the river, for example hydrology or dams. These divisions are helpful reference points in discussing the river and are referred to as reaches.

Q: Did you come out of the river to sample any of the banks or

floodplain? Will EPA be doing additional sediment sampling?

A: No - that was not the purpose of this sampling. EPA is not planning on doing any additional sediment sampling at this point. Next steps will be taken when the risk assessment comes out.

Q: What level would be a direct contact risk?

A: The risk assessment will permit us to determine that.

Q: Are there still hotspots?

A: The sampling we conducted does not appear to suggest that there are in Connecticut.

Q: Are these presentation slides available to the CT Subcommittee members?

A: Yes, the presentation can be forwarded to MODR and those interested can approach Kirk Fallis for a copy.

Updates

EPA (Bryan Olson)

½ Mile: EPA updated the work progress on the first half-mile of the Housatonic River. River remediation on this portion of the river is now 85% complete. This portion of the project is expected to be complete by the summer. The project has been slowed as pockets of oil are being found. The project just completed one of the most difficult cells that took several months to get through. There are 3 cells left to remediate. EPA will begin work on the next mile and half and is working with Corps and contractors to that end. The project will use a similar technique and will be cleaning up the flood plain properties as the project progresses downriver.

Repositories: EPA led a discussion of the current state of information repositories, their number, and their placement. EPA stated that while some repositories were doing a great job at chronologically organizing and storing the material, the situation at other repositories is very different. Other repositories are not able to store the material, some have incomplete collections, some have material that is not well organized, and still others have stated that they neither have the staff nor resources to continue to be repositories. EPA would like to reduce the number of repositories while at the same time try to ensure that the remaining repositories are complete, organized, and able to be used by members of the public.

EPA is also looking at alternative ways of disseminating information and is committed to trying to get current materials posted on the web as soon as available. CDs may also prove a useful tool for repository locations where space is at a premium. EPA will not have a choice but to eliminate some locations as the hosts no longer wish to store this information.

Discussion

There was discussion concerning where there are any requirements from the judge with respect to the maintenance of repositories in Connecticut. The concern expressed was that there will only be one complete repository for the State in Litchfield County - and this may limit ability of some residents (i.e. those not comfortable with technology) from accessing important information at precisely the time when it has become more important for public outreach to be done. Tim Conway of EPA is unaware of any requirements with respect to repositories from the judge. Tim reminded the Committee that several repositories were added for the purpose of the CD. Now it is necessary for cost reasons and manageability to reduce that number. Currently there are 6 repositories in MA and 4 in CT. There is one legally complete repository in Boston at EPA. EPA is not taking away access to information,

rather we have enhanced it in a number of ways, such as the website, which is one of the largest for the Agency. EPA is meeting the challenge of getting information that the public needs to them in new ways. Having 4 repositories in CT was neither efficient nor cost effective.

There was also the opinion expressed that there should be at least one complete repository for the State. CT DEP explained that they do not attempt to keep all documents relating to the cleanup - rather they focus on only those documents relating to CT. It was felt that EPA should make it website comprehensive and should increase public awareness through outreach. HEAL also expressed the view that Cornwall, CT would be an ideal location for a hard copy repository.

CT Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEP) (Susan Peterson and Charlie Fredette)

CT DEP clarified a question that was raised at a previous CT Subcommittee meeting with respect to whether the CT DEP has established a risk level for PCBs and what that level is. Charlie Fredette explained that this is a complex question that is overly broad and for that reason difficult to answer. This question could refer to a number of different things, such as risk level for humans, direct exposure level etc. For example, the CT Health Department has rendered an opinion with respect to water and sediment that there is no risk when swimming. There is a consumption advisory based on risk factors that CT DPH has established. If the committee is interested, Brian Toal might be the person to explain how that determination is reached. A cooperative agreement report has just been published on fish samples called, PCB Concentrations in Fish 1984-2000.

Discussion:

Agreed that the CT Subcommittee will approach Brian and request information and/or presentation. There were questions from Committee members whether PCBs are comparatively high and did this make it risky to consume the fish. CT DEP suggested that we invite CT DPH to answer these types of questions for the CT Subcommittee.

Natural Resource Damages (N R D) (By Rick Jacobson for Ed Parker, CT Trustee)

Rick was asked to explain the difference between the NRD and the clean-up work that GE is doing. Remediation really involves the clean-up effort of getting PCBs out of the river. The fact that PCBs were in the river for years has caused damage to river, biota, and natural resources. NRD money is designed for projects to help restore those damaged natural resources.

The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the federal and state trustees has been signed. This is an important milestone that allows the NRD work to be funded and to move forward. Plans have moved forward to form the CT Subcouncil for NRD. The agreement is on EPA's website.

Next Steps:

- * Form the NRD CT Sub Council
- * Develop public participation plan

Discussion:

Rick Jacobson requested that CT Subcommittee members with opinions on where the meetings should be held for the NRD CT Sub council contact him. Goal is to have these meetings in a variety of areas in public venues such as town halls and high schools.

The NRD Sub council will fall under freedom of information law. All Sub council meetings will be open to the public. Schedule of regular meetings will be published and special meetings will be on 24-hour notice to the public.

There was a request to clarify the role of the NRD Sub Council

and the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC). Rick explained that the Sub council would have trustees from the CT DEP and the two federal trustees on it. NRD Sub Council requires unanimous agreement of all 3 trustees to approve projects. CAC will assist and advise the Commissioner of DEP in planning and strategies for moving forward.

Q: When will the CAC meet?

A: Has not been determined yet.

Q: Is there a scope of work yet for the consultants you plan on hiring?

A: No not yet.

Q: Was the Federal Trustee, Veronica Varela notified?

A: Assistant facilitator explained that USFWS email was still down. However he had a conversation with Veronica and due to a scheduling conflict she was not able to make it to tonight's meeting.

CT DEP also checked in with the CT Subcommittee in respect to consumption advisory signs. It was reported that signs had been delivered and appear to be visibly posted. One exception appeared to be Lake Lillinonah, which did not appear to have signed posted.

Other Issues

Next Meeting of the CT Subcommittee: Please note that our next meeting will be June 24, 2002 at the Kent Town Hall, Kent CT starting at 7:00 PM.

ACTION ITEMS

Entry Date	Item	Responsible	Deadline
3/25/02	Forward the presentation slides to those who would like a copy.	Kirk Fallis	ASAP